

Abstract for LEAP Presentation, October 17, 2014

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“Researching Your Roots: What’s At Stake When Conducting Hometown Research”

In the past sixty years in the United States, many sports teams at the high school and university level have switched from their Native American mascots to something less controversial. After two years of debate, in 2009, Natick, Massachusetts, (my hometown) was added to the list of towns that relinquished their high school mascot: the Natick Redmen. These decisions are rarely easy, often dividing communities between political and personal beliefs. Interested in the ties between identity, memory, and community, I chose to conduct independent research this summer on Natick’s mascot debate. Researching in my hometown, however, was more complicated than I anticipated. My experience this summer has left me reflecting on the question: in what ways can personal identity influence your role as a researcher?